employment programmes to create better infrastructure and wage employment opportunities in the rural areas.

As regard the self-employment programmes, the recommendations of the Mehta Committee (1993) and Hashim Committee (1997) have brought out the need to restructure them by providing a definite objective of improving the family incomes of the rural poor as well as providing for flexibility of design at the grass-roots level to suit the local needs and resources and to merge the present self-employment programmes i.e. training of Rural Youth for Self-employment (TRISEM), Supply of improved Toolkits to Rural Artisans (SITRA), Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) and Ganga Kalyan Yojna (GKY) into the Integrated Rural Development Programme.

Watershed development Scheme in Maharashtra

845. SHRI GOVINDRAO ADIK: Will the Minister of RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have worked out a comprehensive plan of action for watershed development, harnessing excess water during rainy season and improved farm management practices;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of assistance provided to the State Government to implement uniform guidelines on watershed development; and

(d) the details of State-allocation made during the current year for watershed development and progress achieved so far, particularly in Maharashtra?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI BABAGOUDA PATIL): (a) and (b) No such comprehensive plan of action for watershed development practices have been worked out by the Department of Wasteland Development. Watershed development projects are prepared by the DRDAs and executed by them. They prepare comprehensive plans for watershed development.

(c) Details of assistance provided to the State Govts./DRDA to implement the watershed development programmes are given in the Annexure [See Appendix 184, Annexure No. 24]

(d) State-wise allocations are not made. Funds are released to DRDA/Zilla Parishads on project to project basis. Details of funds released towards implementation of watershed development projects in Maharashtra are as under.

	Name of district	Total cost (Rs. in lakhs)	Total funds released (Rs. in lakhs)
1.	Nasik	156.73	115.68
2.	Ahmednagar	42.03	37.53
3.	Parbhani	381.60	57.24
	Total	580.36	210.46

Criteria for Selecting IAY beneficiaries

846. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) what are the criteria in force for selection of Indira Awas Yojana housing beneficiaries;

(b) whether it is a fact that a number of grievances have arisen on the mode of selection of IAY beneficiaries;

(c) whether any suggestion have been received to improve the present system; and

(d) if so, the steps proposed to review the IAY Scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI BABAGOUDA PATIL): (a) Selection of IAY beneficiaries is to be done by the Gram Sabha from among people below poverty line and the order of priority for selection of beneficiaries amongst the target group is as follows:

* Freed bonded labourers
* SC/ST households who are victims of atrocities.
* SC/ST household below poverty line headed by widows and unmarried women.

* SC/ST households affected by flood, fire, earthquake and similar natural calamities.
* Other SC/ST households below poverty line.
* Non SC/ST households below poverty line.
* Physically handicapped.
* Families/widows of personnel from defence service/para-military forces, killed in action.
* Displaced persons on account of development projects, nomedic semi-nomadic, and de-notified tribals and families with disabled members, subject to the condition that these households belongs to below poverty line category.

(b) to (d) The selection procedure for IAY beneficiaries has been streamlined with effect from 1.4.98. Accordingly, it has been decided that District Rural Development Agencies (DRDA) Zilla Parishads on the basis of allocations made and targets fixed shall decide Panchayat-wise number of houses to be constructed under IAY, during a particular financial year and intimate the same to the Gram Panchayat. Thereafter, the Gram Sabha will select the beneficiaries restricting its number to the target allotted, from the list of eligible households, according to IAY guidelines and as per priorities fixed. No approval of the Panchayat Samiti will be required. The Panchayat Samiti should however, be sent a list of selected beneficiarises for their information. This ensures selection of beneficiaries in a transparent and objective manner.

Million Wells' Scheme

847. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) what is the present status of the "Million Wells' Scheme";

(b) whether this programme has been abandoned;

(c) the funds earmarked for this scheme in 1998-99; and

(d) what are the main features of this scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI BABAGOUDA PATIL): (a) The Million Wells Scheme (MWS) continues to be implemented as an on-going scheme to provide open irrigation wells free of cost to poor small and marginal farmers who are below poverty line and freed bonded labourers.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) The tentative Central allocation for the Scheme during 1998-99 is Rs. 450 crore.

(d) The main features of MWS besides the one mentioned in reply to part (a) above are:—

(i) The expenditure under the scheme is shared between the Centre and the States in the ratio of 80:20.

(ii) The state-wise allocation under the Scheme is made on the basis of the proportion of rural poor in State to the total rural poor in the country.

(iii) If wells are not feasible due to geological factors, the amounts allotted under MWS may be utilised for other works of minor irrigation like irrigation tanks, water harvesting structures and also for development of lands belonging to small and marginal farmers. The amount can not be diverted for any other works.

(iv) The beneficiaries themselves implement the schemes by their own labour for which they are paid wages or by hiring local labourers. Contractors are strictly prohibited.

(v) The beneficiaires are selected by the Village Panchayats and then approved by the DRDAs/Zilla Parishads.

(iv) The financial assistance provided to Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) poor small and marginal farmers must not be less than two third of the total funds utilised under the Scheme in a Year.